

RUNNING A COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL STATE  
MACHINE THROUGH A PACKET CLASSIFIER

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ABSTRACT

- 10 One embodiment of the invention relates to processing communication packets. A communication packet belongs to a communication data structure (called "conn") which is unique to a connection including the communication packet. The conn also contains an event list which is a sequential list of functions necessary to process the packet. An event list is selected from a database based on the protocol layers
- 15 necessary to process the packet and typically contains as many functions as there are layers in between. Therefore, each layer has a functional entry point as an event in the event list. The event list identifies a plurality of communication modules specific for the connection and an ordering thereof. The packet is processed through the plurality of modules based on the ordering. The event list is manipulated to enable a module of
- 20 the plurality of communication modules to enter one of a plurality of its operational states.